

NOTES AND BOOK REVIEWS.

Good times have been prophesied, but they do not come. Business is stagnant still, and confidence is lacking. And why? Where, as in banking, rigid watchfulness is called for, we observe careless negligence. Special favors are shown to relatives and friends against the express provisions of the law. Political nominations and appointments are made for the sake of rewarding stump orators and campaign workers. The advocates of a high-tariff policy are apparently resuming their old tinkering and bargaining with the silver senators. The spoils system is regarded as the natural condition of things, and deviations from the straight path of honesty are deemed pardonable. Such is the situation of the country! And with all that we are promised good times! But good times cannot come until honesty is recognised to be indispensable in all business affairs, in politics, and in religion.

Religion should be at the bottom of all exertions, of all business, of all politics; but religion is not church-going. Religion is honesty. Religion is not belief, religion is faithfulness. Religion is not observance of traditions, religion is taking life and its duties seriously. Do not make light of the doctrines of your church; face the problems of belief fearlessly and squarely. Dare to have a conviction, and aspire to have the right conviction which can stand criticism. Then take your conviction with you into practical life and apply it to politics and to business. You will thus within the circle of your influence contribute your share to the general prosperity of the country. Confidence is the condition of good times, and the prevalence of honesty is the condition of confidence.

C. Hermann Boppe of Milwaukee, the editor of the *Freidenker*, criticises *The Open Court* in an article on "The Belief in God and Immortality," (published in the *Freidenker-Almanach* for 1897) in which he quotes with approval Carl Heinzen, who says: "As Cortez burned the ships behind him, so radicalism burns the ships before itself—not only that fallacious boat of Charon on which those who in life are cheated out of truth and elysium, hope to attain truth and elysium after death, but also the air-ships on which man's imagination is supernaturally carried into heaven or eternity." Mr. Boppe condemns the policy of retaining the words "Religion," "God," "Soul," "Immortality," even though they may receive new contents and a definite scientific meaning. Without making any objection to the proposition that science is a revelation, he regards the solution offered in the Religion of Science as a compromise with superstition, which leads to paradoxical statements and will ultimately prove nothing but a waste of time. We have stated our answer to men of this type in our reply to Corvinus in Nos. 414 and 432 of *The Open Court*, and it seems unnecessary here to repeat our arguments. It is true that in the new

light which modern psychology sheds on the problem of the soul, we should for the sake of accuracy abolish the old modes of expression and invent new terms. But this method would lead to nothing, and would be little helpful for the progress of mankind. The new astronomy of Copernicus changed our world-conception in a similar way, and we ought to have altered a great number of phrases which are in common use, such as "sunrise" and "sunset," but the attempt to do so would simply have increased the confusion and would have availed little towards the proof of the new doctrine. In addition, these terms, in spite of being inaccurate, are quite justifiable, for to the people of a certain place the sun actually rises and sets. The facts are not changed, but the conception of the facts receives a new, a deeper, and a truer interpretation, which removes all the various insurmountable difficulties of the old interpretation.

If we had to invent new terms for every new phase in the discovery of truth, we ought to change our whole language every two or three centuries, and if we should condemn religion because it is in its beginning mixed up with superstition and its path leads through error to truth, we ought at the same time to condemn science, for science too, has to pass through phases of misconception and false theories. We might just as well abolish the universities as the churches, because the science of to-day is in many respects a combination of errors and confusion. In brief, since the facts of life remain the same in the new dispensation of the Religion of Science as they have always been, the absolute denial of the old formulations is not less erroneous than their implicit acceptance and the only way out of this dilemma is to purify the traditional notions and make religion more and more scientific. There is no need of burning our ships either before us or behind us.

Mr. Ohara of Otsu, Omi, Japan, the translator into Chinese and publisher of *The Gospel of Buddha*, writes that he will be pleased to supply copies of the Chinese edition of *The Gospel of Buddha* for seventy-five cents, and has sent us a number of copies in order to enable us to fill orders at once. We may add that the translation is in the modern Chinese-Wenli, not in the old style of the classical books of China, but in the language of to-day, of the official dispatches, of the translation of the Bible, of the Chinese newspapers, and of the commercial world in the Celestial Empire. It has received the endorsement and high praise of the Rev. Tan Tek Soon, one of the leaders among Chinese Buddhists of Singapore, who writes in a letter to H. Dharmapāla: "That it is apparently translated by an educated Japanese reflects the greatest credit on that enterprising nation, and is a noble repayment of the many debts of religious instruction received by the Japanese from their neighbors. . . . It will help greatly to advance the cause of religion among my countrymen."

Mr. Rama-Chandra Sen, Ex-Inspector of Schools at Oude, has briefly outlined his philosophy in a pamphlet entitled *Monado-Mononism* which he published some time ago in India. He has in the meantime made friends in the far West, among them Dr. R. Norman Foster of Chicago, whose enthusiasm induced him to publish a new exposition of Mr. Sen's *Monado-Mononism* in the shape of a pamphlet which presents in a condensed form the world-conception of such an Eastern thinker as is Mr. Sen.

Mr. Sen believes that all existence is conscious and is radiating in a supreme focus (p. 7). Conscious unconditioned feeling is the noumenon which as unconditioned cause unconditionally conditions itself (p. 9). Time and space are mo-

nadic; motion and matter atomic (p. 13). The simplest individual is a mineral (p. 16). A plant is a cognitional organism of the simplest kind (18). A brute is an emotional organism (p. 20). Man is a reflective organism higher than brute (p. 22). A spirit is a perfect cognitional being of the highest kind (p. 27). An angel is a perfect emotional being of the highest kind (p. 30). A cherub is a perfect reflective being of the highest kind (p. 33). A seraph is a perfect super-reflective being of the highest kind (p. 35). Lastly, the self-existing, sublimest focus is the eternal, unchangeable, unchanging Monon (p. 37), which is all-absolute and omniscient (p. 38). Man's stages of progress are marked as spirit-man, angel-man, cherub-man, seraph-man, and God-man. The God-man is the end of Nature's evolution and the *summum bonum* of religion (p. 48).

While we do not agree with Mr. Sen's methods of philosophising, we have found much that is of interest in his speculations which in their naïve simplicity remind us of the lofty constructions of various European thinkers who have attained great fame. We must also add that we recognise in Mr. Sen an earnest desire to embody in his system both the results of Oriental and Western research. The Roman proverb says: "*In magnis voluisse sat est.*" P. C.

The Biblical World of January, 1897, is, as most of its predecessors have been, full of interesting material, popular in tone, and yet scholarly. George B. Foster, speaking of "The Theological Training for the Times," says in bold honesty: "There are some things which ought to be said with the utmost freedom and frankness." And speaking of the theological student who is sorely perplexed by the dilemma of traditional faith and the results of scientific criticism, he says:

"He is divided between two feelings: perplexed on the one hand by a suspicion that in clinging to traditional orthodoxy he may be untrue to himself; and checked on the other side by a fear that in discarding it he may be casting aside ideas essential to his moral and spiritual life. At such a time a divinity school should indeed be an *Alma Mater* to him. And if its work be destructive in part, as in part today it must, it is destructive for the sake of construction, the constructiveness of Him who, though he destroyed, came not to destroy but to fulfil."

Among other material of interest we note an article by George S. Goodspeed on the "Ideal Childhood in Non-Christian Religions," in which he surveys the childhood legends of Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Lao-Tsze, Krishna, and Mohammed. From the new Egyptian discoveries made by Mr. Petrie, the tablet of Amen-Hotep the Third is reproduced from a photograph by Brugsch, the inscription of which is of special interest because it contains on the back of the tablet a mention of the people of Israel. Among the accounts of other victories, the king announces that "Israel is desolated; his grain is not (i. e., his harvests are destroyed); Palestine has become as widows for Egypt (i. e., the people of the country have become as helpless as widows before the attacks of Egypt). Not the least valuable contribution is the editorial which insists on a thorough study of the Bible. The editor asks: "Is it not legitimate from the point of view of Sunday observance to use a portion of the day for the study of the Bible, and is it not legitimate to perform such study thoroughly and with a view to permanent results, as to perform it superficially and without expectation of accomplishing anything?" The author of the article, referring to the Revised Edition, condemns those as "criminally guilty" who would conceal the "light which God in his providence has shed upon his own revelation."

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